

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4014

S E C R E T KABUL 5536

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK, SOV

REPORTED SOVIET APPROACH TO PAKISTAN ON PAK/AF BORDER

REF: A. STATE 195235 B) KABUL 5307 C. ISLAMABAD 7433

1. PAKISTAN DCM IN KABUL TANVIR AHMED KHAN PAID CALL ON ME AUGUST 24 TO BRIEF ME ON BEHALF OF AMBASSADOR ARSHAD "ON AN EXTRAORDINARY SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH HAD OCCURRED RECENTLY". HE SAID IT INVOLVED SOVIET/PAK RELATIONS AND THE RUSSIAN POSITION IN SOUTH ASIA. I DID NOT INDICATE ANY PRIOR KNOWLEDGE.

2. PAK DCM SAID THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO KABUL PUZANOV HAD ENCOUNTERED PAK AMBASSADOR ALI ARSHAD AT A RECEPTION ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 8 AND PUZANOV HAD TEASED ARSHAD ABOUT NEVER CALLING ON THE RUSSIANS. PUZANOV ADDED THAT HE KNEW THAT ARSHAD WAS SEEING THE CHINESE "ALL THE TIME". PUZANOV ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID TO ARSHAD HE HAD AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR HIM.

3. SUBSEQUENTLY, ON AUGUST 9, ARSHAD CALLED ON PUZANOV AT THE USSR EMBASSY. AT THIS MEETING, ACCORDING TO PAK DCM KHAN, PUZANOV DELIVERED A STERN LECTURE ON RECENT ALLEGED UNFRIENDLINESS ON THE PART OF PAKISTAN TOWARDS RUSSIAN AND ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF SUCH UNFRIENDLY TRENDS WERE TO CONTINUE, THE RUSSIANS MIGHT HAVE TO RECONSIDER THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THAT "COLONIAL REMNANT," THE PAKISTAN/AFGHAN BORDER. (AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE PAK/AFGHAN BORDER HAD NEVER BEEN QUESTIONED BEFORE BY THE RUSSIANS.)

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4. THE PAK DCM SAID THIS CONVERSATION WAS REPORTED TO ISLAMABAD AND, STILL ACCORDING TO THE PAK DCM, THE PUZANOV DEMARCHE SUBSEQUENTLY WAS RAISED IN ISLAMABAD WITH SOVIET OFFICIAL ZORIN DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO PAKISTAN. ACCORDING TO KHAN, ZORIN TOLD THE PAKISTANIS THERE MUST BE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING, SINCE RUSSIAN POLICY REMAINED CONSTANT TOWARD PAKISTAN.

5. THEN, TWO DAYS AGO (AUGUST 22 OR 23), KHAN TOLD ME, PUZANOV ENCOUNTERED ARSHAD AT A SOCIAL OCCASION IN KABUL AND "OUT OF THE BLUE" DENIED THAT HE HAD SAID ANYTHING TO ARSHAD ON AUGUST 9TH ABOUT CALLING INTO QUESTION THE PAK/AF FRONTIER. WHEN ARSHAD SAID HE WAS QUITE SURE HE HAD UNDERSTOOD PUZANOV'S PRESENTATION, PUZANOV RETORTED THAT HIS RUSSIAN TRANSLATOR MADE A MISTAKE.

6. AT THE END OF THE ACCOUNT, I ASKED TANVIR KHAN WHAT HE MADE OF ALL THIS. KHAN REPLIED THAT HE FELT PERHAPS PUZANOV HAD "OVERDONE IT" IN EXPRESSING USSR CONCERN TO PAKISTAN FOR THE INTEGRITY OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PANJSHIR INSURGENCY IN JULY 1975. (THERE WERE REPORTS AT THE TIME THAT THE INSURGENCY HAD PAK SUPPORT). HOWEVER, KHAN SAID, ISLAMABAD HAD BEEN VERY WORRIED BY THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN DEMARCHE SINCE THE PAKS ARE WATCHING CLOSELY WHAT KHAN DESCRIBED AS "THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN INDIA" WHICH COULD LEAD THE DELHI GOVERNMENT TO MILITARY ADVENTURISM AGAINST PAKISTAN. SUCH A VENTURE, ACCORDING TO KHAN, MIGHT INVOLVE THE AFGHANS AND BE ORCHESTRATED BY THE SOVIETS TO DESTROY PAKISTAN AND ENHANCE THE RUSSIAN POSITION IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

7. I THANKED MR KHAN FOR CONFIDING IN ME AND TOLD HIM IT WAS OUR ASSESSMENT HERE THAT AT PRESENT THE AFGHAN MILITARY BY ITSELF POSED NO THREAT TO PAKISTAN. I ALSO TOLD HIM IT WAS US POLICY TO URGE RESTRAINT AND MODERATION ON THE AFGHANS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN.

8. KHAN, WHILE AGREEING THAT THE AFGHAN ARMY BY ITSELF WAS NO MENACE TO PAKISTAN, SAID THE SOVIETS AND INDIANS HAD TO BE CLOSELY WATCHED. KHAN SAID THE RUSSIANS WERE MOVING MORE ADVISORS INTO THE AFGHAN ARMY AND SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WAS  
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POTENTIALLY OMINOUS.

9. WE AGREED TO KEEP IN TOUCH ON THESE MATTERS.

10. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT TO ISLAMABAD, DELHI MOSCOW AND TEHRAN.  
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